



EVERY DAY IN EVERY WAY

USDA's Cultural Transformation Action Items

- LEADERSHIP
- RECRUITMENT & RETENTION
- TALENT MANAGEMENT
- EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT
- CUSTOMER FOCUS & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

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MyUSDA

A Progress Report for Employees on USDA's Cultural Transformation

Volume 5, Issue 3

January/February 2015

USDA Awards 2014 Feds Feed Family Cup

USDA employees generously donated millions of pounds of food during last summer's Feds Feed Families (FFF) program. A friendly but spirited competition for the USDA FFF Cup Award increased participation and helped with the donation efforts.



USDA's Feds Feed Families Chair John Glover (above left) presents the 2014 FFF Cup to Assistant Secretary for Administration Dr. Gregory Parham (above right).

The FFF Cup was created as part of the 2014 campaign to increase campaign awareness and encourage donations. The FFF Cup is a USDA-only effort. It is a travel award that goes to the entity with greatest contribution each year.

In a January ceremony, the chair of USDA's FFF efforts, John Glover of the Natural Resources Conservation Service, bestowed the award on USDA's Departmental Management. Mr. Glover presented the 2014 FFF Cup to Assistant Secretary for Administration Dr. Gregory Parham.

The employees of Departmental Management contributed 870,047 pounds—or 20.7% of USDA's total contribution. On average, DM staff contributed 547 pounds of food per employee, more than any other USDA agency or office.

During the 2014 campaign, 14.8 million pounds of food were donated Government-wide. Of that total, USDA contributed 6.2 million pounds.

Overall, USDA led all Federal Departments and agencies in contributions to Feds Feed

Families. As a result of USDA's efforts, the Department was recognized as "large Department lead" and "overall greatest contributor."

You can contact MyUSDA by emailing MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov, and be sure to visit the [USDA Cultural Transformation Website](http://www.usda.gov/culturaltransformation).

APHIS Employee Noted for Cultural Transformation Efforts

By A. E. Johnson and Steve Crescini

Cindy Hadlich is the Animal and Plant Health and Inspection Service (APHIS) Section Chief for the Human Resource Operations (HRO) Leave and Compensation Team, and she is a leader in Cultural Transformation.

Cindy distinguished herself and her commitment to the implementation of Cultural Transformation by being a founding member of the Summer Blast committee for HRO's late last year. She researched and brought in a fantastic motivational speaker, Tasha Shuh (pictured far right, along with Cindy Hadlich, center, and Ms. Shuh's husband, Doug Michaels, on the left). Ms. Shuh's keynote speech was about her time as a performer and dancer who endured a tragic accident that made her quadriplegic. The speech about overcoming obstacles and adversity and how persons with disabilities can contribute on many levels was a moving reminder that contributions in the workplace include vital input from an incredibly diverse group of employees.



Cindy continued her Cultural Transformation commitment via outreach by hiring an employee to fill her vacant Civilian Pay Tech position with a Schedule A candidate a few months after the Summer Blast. She has been instrumental in bringing new employees onboard and making them part of the team. Cindy's commitment to the success of Cultural Transformation is undeniable, and her actions speak to her dedication and success. Thanks, Cindy!

USDA Honors Its Outstanding Cultural Transformers

By Max Finberg

At the end of last year, the USDA family gathered to honor some of our colleagues and recognize all those who have contributed to the success of the Cultural Transformation initiative. Secretary Vilsack (pictured left) provided inspiring remarks to a full house in Jefferson Auditorium and an audience around the country on December 15th.



He reinforced our collective commitment to transforming the culture at USDA and thanked the 136 employees in 20 teams who received awards. They were selected for their outstanding work in: Leadership, Recruitment and Retention, Talent Management, Employee Development and Customer Focus and Community Outreach. The Virtual University team was just some of the winners shown below.

The theme for this inaugural event was, "A Modern People's Department—A 21st Century USDA." Dr. Gary Pederson of ARS in Georgia

demonstrated this by implementing a strong customer service ethic, dramatically increasing the sharing of resources and creating new public-private partnerships at his lab.

A group of NRCS employees from around the country formed the Lactation Support Team. The team developed policies and materials to support nursing mothers in the field that have now been shared across the federal government.



USDA WINTER OLYMPICS IN FULL SWING

By Debra Arnold

The torch has been lit and the Olympians are off to a great start for the USDA 2015 Winter Olympics, logging over 68,466 minutes of activity during the first week of competition! Three hundred seventy-nine Olympians are competing for Gold in the beginner or intermediate area by performing physical fitness challenges. The top leaders to date, who log their progress on their personal time, are listed below:



Herman, Joyce	AMS/DC	Turtle	450 min
Jensen, Brett	FSIS/ID	Turtle	410 min
Wipperfurth, Christy	AMS/WI	Turtle	352 min
Malkin, Karen	FSA/DC	Fox	900 min
Fall, Susan	GIPSA/MN	Fox	621 min
Benge, Alan	NRCS/IA	Fox	610 min
Young, Marianna	NRCS/CO	Lion	1095 min
Schultz, Steven	FSIS/WI	Lion	1,005 min
Steudlein, Paul	OCFO/LA	Lion	777 min

The Leader Board will be posted each week on our Community of Practice site of USDA Connect at [Work/Life and Wellness](#). Olympians are encouraged to visit this blog frequently to share your exercise routines, encourage others and provide us with feedback on the Olympics. We invite all employees to visit our site to see what's happening in Work/Life and Wellness at USDA! Remember - no matter who wins the Gold, we are all winners as long as we keep moving!

USDA FSIS Participates in Latino College Expo

By Greg Rosenthal

USDA's booth was a popular destination at the recent First Latino College Expo in Los Angeles, where students from 6th grade to college talked one-on-one to representatives of Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) and other organizations offering opportunities to Hispanic students. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS), and Rural Development (RD) staffed the booth and coordinated the event with assistance from the Departmental Management's Office of Human Resources Management and AMS Civil Rights office.

"I was very pleased with the student turnout at the EXPO, with over 250 estimated visitors to our USDA booth," said Patricia Alberico, an AMS Agricultural Commodity Grader. "Our three agencies allowed the students to see how USDA effectively reaches out to all aspects of our communities!" The event had deep meaning for RD Area Specialist Edgar Ortega, who said, "Being on the other side of the table was an opportunity to close a circle on my professional career. Now, I was the person giving the information to students, but before I was the HSI student looking for an opportunity in government."

USDA's Patricia Alberico, Ruth Gonzalez, and Edgar Ortega (L-R) fielded questions from hundreds of students at the First Latino College Expo. (Not pictured, employees Pedro Rodriguez and Janette Pagan-Sanchez.)



ERS Serves Up Breakfast—And More!

By Gunner Hamlyn

Established over six years ago, the monthly ERS Newbie Breakfast welcomes new and temporary staff to the agency and provides a place for them to meet and mingle. Currently organized by Annemarie Kuhns, Ryan Kuhns, and Lindsay Kuberka, the group provides employees coffee, pastries, and a more intimate setting in which to meet, a prime factor in fostering cross-divisional socialization. That socialization has led to collaboration as well, with the breakfasts credited as the origin of a group who developed an Innovation Research Grant project in 2014. Attendees also learn about the expertise and resources present at ERS from more senior staff. The group is open to all staff, including those who may simply feel new at heart, and proves that a good breakfast is more than just what you eat.

Congratulations to FNS Leadership Institute Graduates

By Susan Siemietkowski

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service's (FNS) Leadership Institute Class of 2014 graduated 23 employees recently at the Old Town Alexandria (Virginia) campus of George Washington University (GWU).



The class was the first to graduate with GWU, earning continuing education credits and Masters Degree credits.

In addition to the four face-to-face sessions, each of the participants completed a thirty day rotation, a change initiative project, and a group capstone project.

The capstone project focused on ways to improve the strategic planning process and

how to engage employees in the process. The Leadership Institute program underscores FNS' commitment to several CT pillars, including, Leadership, Employee Development and Talent Management.

(Pictured) Leadership Institute graduates and FNS leadership team members who participated in the Cultural Transformation process.

Rural Development Community Outreach in Pennsylvania

By Dawn Bonsell

In a chilly warehouse during a cold spell in Pennsylvania, USDA Rural Development state office staff recently participated in USDA's National Service Day at the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank.

The staff helped pack the boxes shown in the photo with non-perishable food to be distributed through local food banks throughout Pennsylvania. They also brought along 18 pounds of food to donate.

Serving 27 counties, the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank is the largest non-profit food distribution organization in central Pennsylvania. The Food Bank solicits, inventories and distributes food and other donated products to more than 800 partner agencies (food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, etc.) that directly serve people struggling with hunger.

The Food Bank distributes more than 32 million pounds of food and grocery products. That is the equivalent of 27 million meals.



Photo: (Left to Right) Dawn Bonsell, Public Affairs Specialist, Kara Boyd, Civil Engineer, Kesha Service, WEP Technician, and Michael Ward, CF Program Director pose with the boxes they helped pack at the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank for USDA's National Service Day.

Secretary Addresses Housing Assistance Council

By Irene Lin

Every two years, the Rural Housing Service (RHS) helps sponsor the Housing Assistance Council (HAC) conference solely devoted to the topic of Rural Housing. This year's theme was "Retool, Rebuild, Renew." Secretary Vilsack reiterated the critical role USDA plays in making the dream of homeownership possible for many rural Americans. Secretary Vilsack offered strong support for our rural housing programs and their importance to jobs and economic development. He praised the hard work Federal employees do every day to help rural Americans. The Secretary's remarks can be viewed by clicking [here](#).

He also offered strong support of our rural housing programs and their importance to jobs and economic development. All of RHS's senior staff attended the conference and participated in intensive pre-conference sessions with major stakeholder groups, covering subjects ranging from farm labor housing issues to housing on Native American tribal lands to how to engage more nonprofits to help USDA market its direct mortgage loan program to hard-to-reach low income communities.

Moises Loza, Executive Director of the Housing Assistance Council, praised USDA for helping make the conference a success. He said, "The evaluations from attendees affirmed the valued role USDA's Rural Development played in the conference. USDA Secretary Vilsack's remarks were enlightening and informative. Many attendees commented on how productive and encouraging the meetings and contact with RHS Administrator Tony Hernandez and his staff were. The accessibility of the RD staff and their outreach to the stakeholders were clearly important contributors to the success of the conference. HAC is grateful to USDA, and particularly to Mr. Hernandez and his staff for their time and participation."



Photo of Secretary Vilsack and HAC Executive Moises Loza courtesy of Jay Mallin Photography.

Coaching at USDA: What's In It for You? Transformation!

By Lavonne Luquis Shelton (ERS) and Steve Sanders (OCIO)

If you would like to be more effective, resilient and self-confident when faced with uncertainty or other challenges at work – and you are passionately committed to personal growth – a six-session engagement with a USDA coach may kick-start a life-changing process.

Coaching encourages self-discovery and reflection about the ways we "show up" and shape our lives at work and at home. It improves productivity and promotes a healthy work/life balance. In *The Three Laws of Performance*, authors Steve Zaffron and Dave Logan write: "How people perform correlates to how situations occur to them." Working with a coach, your perception of your circumstances or "how situations occur" to you, will most likely start to shift.

Coaching creates a confidential space where you can explore new ways of being and different approaches to stressful situations. Coaching will help you clarify your core values, and set meaningful, measureable goals, which will increase your productivity and job satisfaction. Your coach's questions will help you craft a powerful action plan, and also hold up an honest mirror of accountability. Best of all, when your coaching relationship comes to an end, you will have a set of tools to confidently continue to self-coach long into the future. To learn more about how the USDA Coaching program can enhance your career and increase your job satisfaction, email the virtualuniversity@dm.usda.gov.

UPCOMING AT USDA Women's History Month Observance

Date: Thursday, March 5, 2015

**The observance begins at 10:00 (EDT) at the Jefferson Auditorium, Washington, DC.
Employees receive one hour of diversity training for attending USDA Special Observances.**

USDA Rural Development's National Day of Service in Missouri

By Gail Lacey

USDA Rural Development recently partnered with Americans from all walks of life to honor Dr. Martin Luther King's legacy through a National Day of Service. The Day of Service — a “day on, not a day off” — is part of [United We Serve](#), President Obama's national call to service initiative.

In St. Louis, the organizations of the Deputy Chief Information Officer (DCIO), National Financial and Accounting Operations Center, and International Technology Service, teamed up to help feed the hungry by working at the St. Louis Food Bank. The Mission of the Food Bank is to feed hungry people by distributing food throughout the bi-state region and engage the



community in the fight against hunger. The USDA RD team provided over 90 volunteers for two shifts (3 hours each). Besides serving the hungry, it was also an excellent team building event where the volunteers worked together on an assembly line that built filled and wrapped boxes of food that were stacked and readied for next day delivery.

Altogether the volunteers processed, boxed, and loaded 1,773 cases of food weighing over 46,000 pounds. That is 23 tons of food that provides 38,000 meals for the hungry in Illinois and Missouri.

USDA Recognizes Dr. King's National Day of Service

By Ali Muhammad

In Washington, DC, the Department officially marked the holiday by recognizing Dr. King's National Service Day Observance and Drum Major for Service Awards Program. Food Nutrition Service Deputy Administrator for Management Telora Dean (pictured below) served as emcee, and she welcomed remarks from USDA Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden and Under Secretary Dr. Catherine Woteki. In addition, Leon Reynolds, USDA Assistant Branch Chief for Compliance, Agricultural Marketing Service, presented the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity slide show highlighting Dr. King's years as a member of that prestigious service oriented fraternal organization.

A panel discussion entitled, “The Legacy of Dr. King” was moderated by Ms Dean. Panel members included Dr. Gregory L. Parham, Assistant Secretary for Administration (ASA); Alfred L. Almanza, Deputy Under Secretary, Food Safety; Leslie Wheelock, Director of Tribal Relations; and, Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy, Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

The USDA National Service Day, Drum Major for Service Awards, were presented by Dr. Parham (ASA) and Dr. Zina B. Sutch, Director, Diversity, Recruitment and Work/Life in the Office of Human Resources Management. The following employees received awards:

- Keisha “Ama” Nelson-Share Point Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service
- Reedema Rock-Contract Specialist, Agricultural Marketing Service
- Cliola Peterson, Information Support Specialist, Economic Research Service
- Gary L. Eickhorst, Budget Analyst, Forest Service
- Gregory Taylor, Wildlife Biologist, Forest Service
- Federally Employed Job Corps Alumni (FEJCA), Forest Service (Sean Boe, Tomasina Brown, Jeleea Furgurson, Amtchat Edwards, Michaela Hall, Shray Jackson, and Ken yatta Woods)
- Abdel Alagbe, Consumer Safety Inspector, Food Safety and Inspection Service
- Randy L. Kristek, Consumer Safety Inspector, Food Safety and Inspection Service
- Aaron Shelton, Soil Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Janet L. White, Investigations Program Coordinator, Office of Inspector General
- Rae Jean Maddox, Loan Assistant, Rural Development



If you'd like to share your feedback about Cultural Transformation, telework, diversity, or any other aspect of work/life at USDA, send an email to:

MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov or visit USDA's [Work/Life and Wellness](#) community website if you have access to [USDA Connections](#).



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If you have ideas for future articles, contact us at MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov

Submit Your Article to MyUSDA

The deadline for March submissions is Monday, February 23, 2015.

Guidance on Submissions to MyUSDA

Submissions to MyUSDA should indicate progress that you, your agency, or your mission area have achieved toward implementing some aspect of the Secretary's Cultural Transformation (CT) Initiative. Submissions may be in the form of a traditional article with a byline (with accompanying photos strongly preferred), a first-person account (describing a personal work-related experience relating to CT progress), or a "brief" (just a few sentences describing a successful Cultural Transformation event, group, initiative, or activity...or some other relevant worklife issue with an accompanying photo. Send photos as separate attachments and make sure they are high quality. **The ideal submission is a great picture with about 75-150 words to go along with it. Maximum length of articles is 250 words.**

Email submissions or further inquiries to MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov.